

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 0331

BANGKOK FOR DEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR TH BM

SUBJ: NARCOTICS: DEA MEETING WITH COLONEL TIN OO

REF: RANGOON 0319

1. COLONEL TIN OO, MILITARY ASSISTANT TO COUNCIL OF STATE CHAIRMAN NE WIN AND DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE BUREAU, MET JANUARY 29 WITH DEA REPS ADDARIO AND SWAIN, ACCOMPANIED BY EMBOFFS. WHILE MEETING WAS BILLED ESSENTIALLY AS A COURTESY CALL, IT LASTED NEARLY AN HOUR AND TIN OO TOOK OCCASION TO REAFFIRM HIS PERSONAL INTEREST IN NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM.

2. COLONEL TIN OO WELCOMED DEA REPS WITH PRESENTS OF BURMESE LACQUERWARE FOR THEM AND FOR AMBASSADOR VANCE (LATTER WILL BE POUCHED TO S/NM BY EMBASSY). HE THEN REVIEWED NARCOTICS PROGRAM ALONG LINES OF DISCUSSIONS HELD JANUARY 28 WITH COL AUNG HTAY AND U SHWE THAN (REFTEL). HE EXPRESSED PARTICULAR INTEREST IN MULTI-SPECTRAL PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT (MSP) AND SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WILLING TO SEND BURMESE FOR TRAINING IN US AND ACCEPT US TECHNICIANS HERE ON TDY. HE NOTED THAT HIS YEAR'S OPIUM CROP NEARING COMPLETION BUT EXPRESSED HOPE THAT PROGRAM COULD BE IN OPERATION FOR NEXT YEAR'S CROP. EMBOFFS REPEATED THAT EXPERT ADVISE ON FEASIBILITY OF PROJECT IN BURMA BEING SOUGHT. COMMENT: IN VIEW TIN OO'S PERSONAL INTEREST IN MSP PROJECT, BELIEVE TECHNICAL CONSULTATION
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SUGGESTED REFTEL SHOULD BE PURSUED PROMPTLY.

3. TIN OO ALSO DISCUSSED POTENTIAL USE OF TRAWLERS AS TRAFFICKING VEHICLE, ESPECIALLY IF ARMY OPERATIONS IN NORTHEAST SUCCEED IN DISRUPTING SIGNIFICANTLY TRADITIONAL OVERLAND OPIUM ROUTES. ADDARIO NOTED THAT HIS DISCUSSED WITH AUNG HTAY AND THAT DEA WILL PROVIDE DATA ON SUSPECTED TRAWLERS.

4. TIN OO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR DEA VISIT AND FOR OFFERS OF INFORMATION ETC., ON REGIONAL NARCOTICS TRAFFIC. HE TOLD DEA REPS THEY WERE WELCOME TO VISIT BURMA AT ANY TIME AND TRAVEL UP-COUNTRY IN "PERMITTED" AREAS. HE SAID AUNG HTAY AND/OR SHWE THAN WOULD RECEIVE THEM IF THEY WERE FREE. COL. TIN OO ALSO ASKED IF AMBASSADOR VANCE PLANNED TO ATTEND REGIONAL NARCOTICS CONFERENCE NEXT APRIL IN KUALA LUMPUR AND, IF SO, URGED DEA TO CONVEY HIS PERSONAL INVITATION FOR AMBASSADOR VANCE TO VISIT RANGOON AS HIS GUEST.

5. COMMENT: WHILE TIN OO COVERED ESSENTIALLY SAME GROUND ALREADY DISCUSSED IN DETAIL IN THE PREVIOUS MEETING WITH BURMESE, WE NONE-THELESS CONSIDER THE FRANK AND CORDIAL SESSION AN IMPORTANT INDICATION OF THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH TOP LEVEL BURMESE AUTHORITIES TAKE THE NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM AND THEIR INTEREST IN COOPERATING WITH THE USG IN THIS FIELD.
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